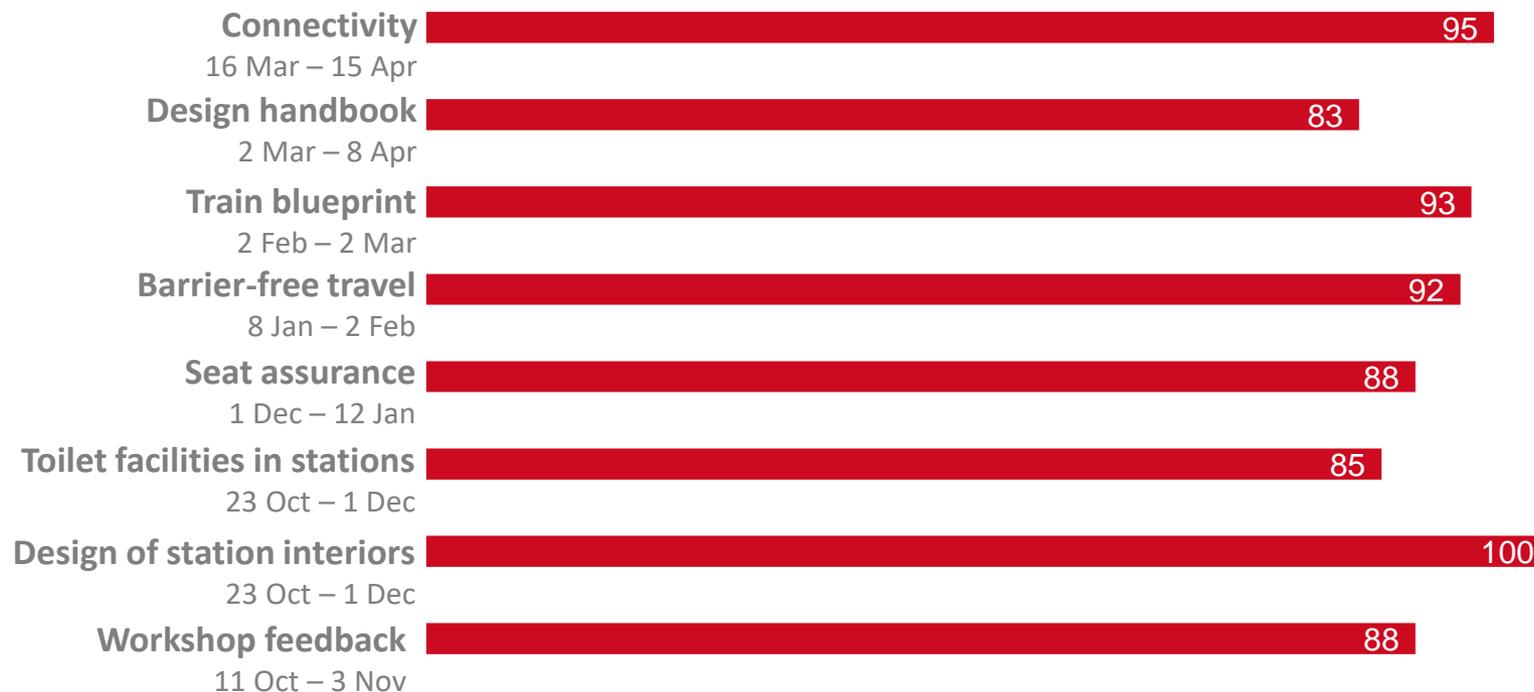




HS2 Customer Community  
Design Handbook – March 2018  
Debrief: 08/05/18

# Panel participation



Average participation in 16/17  
88%

# The task

Objective: to review the Design Handbook 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, seeking feedback to steer editorial style and content for the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

## 🔗 HS2 Design Handbook Task

HS2 has created a Design Handbook that outlines its design vision and different elements that will make up the railway. The purpose of the document is to help get anyone joining HS2 (e.g. a contractor) up to speed.

This is version 1 of the document. HS2 would like your feedback to help them understand whether they're on the right track and to identify any areas that need further work, so they can feed this into version 2.

The handbook is quite long, so community members have been split into groups to look at different parts. Therefore, you're not seeing the whole document so don't worry if some of the numbering doesn't make sense.

Finally, as this is a document to be used internally at HS2, there may be some language that doesn't make too much sense unless very familiar with transport! Please don't worry too much about this, but focus on the overall messages.

**Consider the topics in your document and comment on the following:**

- **What do you think about what you see? Likes/dislikes?**
- **Is there anything within the topics that you think is missing?**

# Overall

Although the Community recognised that they were not necessarily the intended target reader of the handbook, they were able to understand and pass judgment on the concepts.

“Overall, I am quite **impressed** with the pages I have seen, very **educational and an easy read** for me despite the concepts discussed not in my occupation”

Female, 18-23, Commuter

“Overall the **proposed standards** in the portion of the handbook I had is very **positive**”

Female, 70+, Leisure

“It sounds **ambitious, futuristic** and gives a sense of British **distinctiveness**”

Female, 24-30, Business

## HS2 Design Handbook

This handbook is designed to help give you the tools to do the best work you can on HS2

“I like the strap line “design that promotes quality of life”. This sums up in a few words **the difference that good design can make**”

Male, 51-60, Business

“I like that concepts are each explained with sub concepts giving examples and illustrations throughout to **further expand on HS2's vision as a whole on the project**. Thus making sure that everyone is up to date and singing from the same hymn book as it were”

Female, 31-40, Leisure

“Overall I like the document, a lot of it did go over my head I won't lie! But I **understood underlying messages** if not the intricate details”

Male, 18-23, Leisure

# Landscape design

Community members were impressed by the attention HS2 was paying to understanding the different aspects of the landscape that will be affected and exploring the potential ways to have a positive impact.



Conserve



Enhance



Restore



Transform

“I like that the handbook recognises that it will have a detrimental impact on those landscapes that it’s built upon, however provides a number of solutions through focusing on bio-diversity, and the positive steps they will take to mitigate the damage through, for example, sustainability workshops.”

Male, 18-23, Commuter

“On green landscaping I think one topic missed out is to do with ongoing maintenance. Nice flowerbeds might look great when installed but will they still be great in future years at a manageable cost. Also litter is a major problem I see on our tracksides every day. Can any design elements help here in ease of cleansing, and trying not to make the greenery act as a goalmouth to trap any flying debris?”

Male, 51-60, Business

- There was interest in knowing more about putting plans in place to ensure that the landscape is maintained once developed.
- There was also a suggestion that design could be used to help keep the landscape clear.

# Landscape design

Community members were impressed by the attention HS2 was paying to understanding the different aspects of the landscape that will be affected and exploring the potential ways to have a positive impact.



Conserve



Enhance



Restore



Transform



“I also like the idea of having common design features which will feed into easy 'brand recognition'. I am puzzled to know how that will be managed if the design is also to be integrated in the landscape and 'fit' locally. Different areas - different history and different needs?”

Female, 70+, Leisure

- They wanted to know more about how common design elements could be applied across such a complex and diverse landscape.
  - How do you build in consistency and a sense of identity whilst appreciating the uniqueness of different areas?

**Common design elements allow us to deliver value for money and reinforce our network identity along the line of route**

# Open route structures and bridges

The community liked the recognition of how visible open route structures and bridges will be and how much consideration was being given to their design.

- They were excited by the aspiration within the document to make these structures into striking features.

**Bridges must provide a legacy of design excellence for future generations**



Froschgrundsee Viaduct,  
near Erfurt, Germany



Culvert in  
Alberta, Canada

“I like the images of the bridges, it would be pleasant (if massive) surprise if the HS2 route could be lined with interesting and striking bridges and other structures, this gives a good indicator of aim.”

Male, 24-30, Leisure

“There seems to be extensive research into the bridges that’ll need to be constructed. Drawing experiences from other countries is a smart move. Varied designs may be the way forward due to different landscapes as mentioned in the document.”

Male, 18-23, Leisure

“Common Design - I can see a lot of validity in this but there is a danger of the concept. This principle was applied to the first stretches of the M1 motorway and we are left with very bland similar structures such as bridges. The principle must not constrain bold design.”

Male, 61-70, Leisure

# Hoarding

Many were impressed and pleasantly surprised at the potential to use hoarding for more than just their primary purpose, stating that it would make HS2 appear more innovative.

“I have never heard of interactive construction hoarding before I have always in the past come across very bland and boring designs that just advertise the construction company etc. I like the idea of making them **more interactive and more visually pleasing** to look at.”

Female, 31-40, Leisure

“I also found the idea of using local art for the hoarding boards a really great idea especially if the construction is going to be taking a long time, having **something interesting to look at** rather than the standard company logo and boring ‘keep out’ signage really helps make HS2 seem **more modern and freethinking.**”

Female, 31-40, Commuter

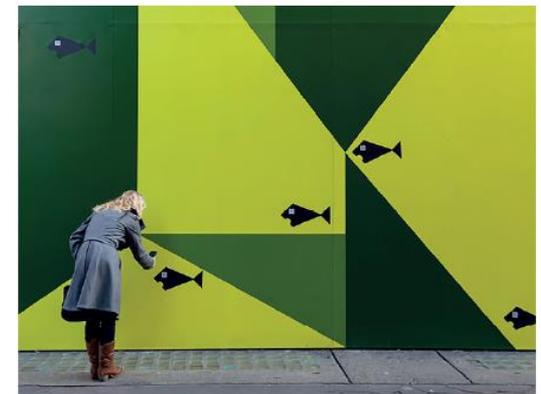
“I liked the added touch of having art on the hoarding because it then makes it **blend into an area** much easier.”

Female, 18-23, Business

“Clearly shows an attractive design of hoardings, modern and characterful, so much so a member of the public wants to interact with it! A very good example of hoardings in my opinion, and a good benchmark to aim for. It's good to see hoardings being taken so seriously, as they are an **important point of interaction with the public**, and may have a significant effect on public opinion. My only suggestion would be more examples of good hoardings.”

Male, 31-40, Leisure

Hoardings for Yoobi,  
London, England



# Public art

The Community also liked how art seemed to extend beyond the hoarding into many different streams of work.

## Art is an integral component of the HS2 programme of work

- They liked the fact that it was threaded throughout the document to indicate all the areas that art could be used to have a positive impact.
- They wondered whether it would be subject to ongoing refreshment to create new opportunities for displaying different art.
  - Could this then become the responsibility of the local community?

“I'm intrigued by the idea about art being integrated, but how does this work after everything has completed?”

Male, 24-30, Business

“I absolutely LOVE the idea that art should be integrated into the work. Will projects continue after the line has been established? It would be fantastic to think that would be the case. Perhaps management of projects could be handed over to the relevant people locally?”

Female, 70+, Leisure

“It's good to see art being promoted as part of the project, so long as it's not at the expense of functionality. The photo is a good demonstration of art that isn't too disruptive, and it's good to see some interaction with a person.”

Male, 18-23, Leisure

# Communities

The community noted that there were many mentions of how local communities will be affected by various parts of the design process, and were impressed to see how HS2 plans to minimise disruption and maximise development opportunities.

- They appreciated the fact that collaboration with communities was stipulated in the document - they felt it became a requirement rather than merely an aspiration.



Design Vision  
People: Engagement

## 2. Engaging with communities over the life of the project

“Community engagement is also good, and putting it in the document means **contractors can be challenged** if they fail to do so.”

Male, 51-60, Business

“The section detailing the Transport Focus panel is progress that opinions from a wide range of the community are being considered.”



Female, 41-50, Leisure

We must adopt a ‘people first’ approach... learning from and acting on community concerns along the line of route, and ensuring we are championing equality, diversity and inclusion to leave a lasting social legacy

“Having an open dialogue with the communities that HS2 is affecting is key. Too many projects go forward without much consultation and this leads to blind hatred of projects. When things are done to open up a conversation (such as this community) **it brings credibility to the project** that would otherwise be missing from many people.”

Male, 18-23, Leisure

“I love that it's not just about HS2 but what it impacts, the surroundings and the local communities. Great that thought is even given to the beginnings i.e. the building sites and how they are perceived by the public, great inclusive ideas at all levels.”

Female, 61-70, Leisure

# Design ambitions

Community members were excited to see details regarding the main stations, but were left wanting to know more and felt that there could be more information added.

“I like the focus on appreciating what is there like Euston and building upon it and **seeing HS2 as more than just a train but something to help all travel**. Seems very detailed but also quite vague in spots like Birmingham I was **expecting to see more design** given its part of Phase 1.”

Male, 24-30, Commuter

“I like the developments/regeneration suggested for Old Oak, Euston, West Midlands, Curzon Street. It is these sort of aspects that could be very positive messages placed in the public arena for attention.”

Male, 61-70, Commuter

- They suggested that these plans could be enhanced and then used to engage and inform the public.
- The lack of detail was seen by some to be an indication that the station plans were not yet in line with aspirations, and would like to see more evidence of how distinctive they will be.

“The renderings for Euston station do not look encouraging. **There is nothing new or distinctive about them**. You should be able to look at an image e.g. the concourse of Grand Central station in New York and instantly know that place. These could be any number of stations/airports.”

Male, 41-50, Commuter

Euston Station is a site of local, regional and national significance and will become part of a thriving new London quarter  
Old Oak Common Station will be a new transport ‘super-hub’ at the heart of one of London’s most exciting developments  
Birmingham Interchange will bring growth to the M42 corridor and the wider West Midland region  
Curzon Street Station is an important catalyst for regeneration in Birmingham city centre

# Accessibility

Many acknowledged the references to accessibility and were impressed that it was addressed throughout the document.

- Community members approved of how proactive HS2 planned to be and were positive that this was the right stage to inform contractors of requirements to ensure that they are implemented.

“The **immediate and clear** highlighting of the needs of those with mobility issues is good.”

Male, 24-30, Leisure

“I like the diversity section. It’s so important to look at these aspects at the design stage as firstly, the solutions tend to **work better**, and secondly it’s **more cost effective to get the design right at the outset** rather than retrofitting something.”

Male, 51-60, Business

## 1. Designing for the needs of our diverse audiences



“It’s great to see a premium service such as this focusing on accessibility when the bulk of the ‘target audience’ usually aren’t included in this particular section of society.

I like the fact the aim of **the design of these features is so they look in place**, too many processes and mechanisms look out of place. They are obviously fitted/put in place after the fact. While this isn’t a problem practically, I feel it can make people who use these **feel even more singled** out than they already feel. As this will be thought of at design stage, I’m positive these processes will be better than what we currently have.”

Male, 18-23, Leisure

# Document format

The community also had some comments on the layout of the document, generally finding it easy to navigate and visually pleasing.

“It’s brief yet sufficient, spaced well with just the right amount of pictures. The usage of colours is spot on too, for instance, using green to talk about landscape.”

Female, 41-50, Leisure

“The pictures are lovely - it is great to have a range of examples from around the world and good practice to aim for. It is also good to see so much use of pictorial communication as well as words.”

Female, 61-70, Business

“Love the layout. Also love the fact that it’s digital and online - it can be updated at anytime if any change were to occur and this info would be up to date.

The information is displayed in an easily identifiable way which makes the finding out what you need to know easier.”

Female, 41-50, Commuter

## Design that promotes quality of life

- The front cover was polarising with some approving of the tagline and appreciating the image.
- However others felt that for such an important document, it was not an iconic clear picture that immediately conveyed the content to the user.

“Good explanation of the cover photo referencing world class design in rail infrastructure that matches the message on the cover in promoting quality of life.”

Female, 41-50, Leisure

“I don’t like the abstract nature of the cover. I think most people understand the objective of the project is a train line, so an abstract view of a station roof doesn’t immediately associate the document with that objective.”

Female, 41-50, Leisure

# Document accessibility

Whilst some thought that the tone of the document was at the right level, others felt that it could be made more accessible to a broader audience.

- They stated that, at present, the document was quite high level. It could be made more user-friendly for different types of contractors by removing 'jargon', simplifying the wording and adding detail to certain sections.

"I am instantly impressed by the table of contents which doesn't follow a traditional contents page by simply listing chapters and page number instead there are 5 headings within the contents, e.g. "your criteria for design success" and then listing the following titles, the use of this has given the handbook a **certain ease of read**, a contractor is able to scroll through those initial five headings and pinpoint within the most relevant heading the page to open, this making **information readily available**."

Female, 18-23, Commuter

"It assumes you know an awful lot about the scheme before reading it. It **needs simplification** and fewer polysyllabic words and **more details** and examples of what has been done so far."

Male, 51-60, Business

"I like the idea of personas to give contractors base to work from to ensure their proposals cover all sections of the users."

Male, 51-60, Business

"Great to have a high level document that underlines the common themes and thinking for the project... but it seems aimed at management rather than those at the coal face so to speak. Those are the workers that will tweak things on a daily basis and I think **this could be made more accessible**.

I work in one of many companies that has come up with single word guiding principles and this seems to try to do the same with the criteria for design success but more could be made of it."

Female, 41-50, Business

# Summary

Collectively, the Community felt that the first edition of the Design Handbook covered an extensive range of design elements in a great amount of detail.

- They recognised that they were not the intended audience of the document, therefore there were various parts that they did not fully understand.
- Therefore, they felt that there was room to simplify some of the text to make it more accessible, to ensure that it was user-friendly for all contractors.
- They were able to engage with the majority of the document's themes and were largely impressed with the attention to detail and the focus on keeping people at the heart of design elements.
- However, there were some areas that they felt needed further information or clarification, particularly regarding aspects that HS2 considered to be requirements rather than simply aspirations.